

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY: CONFIDENTIAL

TO: Department of State

FROM: TAIPEI 152

REF:

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS ON FORMOSA. Intent of Civil Affairs Commissioner to Resign after Elections

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There is enclosed a memorandum of conversation between Second Secretary Jenkins and YANG Chao-chia, Formosan elder who in his capacity of Civil Affairs Commissioner is in charge of elections in Formosa. The intent of Mr. Yang to resign his position upon completion of the elections in May 1951, if carried out, will be a great disappointment to his many admirers throughout the island, and will dramatically underline Formosan dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Kuomintang in regard to the elections during the past two or three months.

ACTION REQUESTED: Department please send copies of this despatch to USPOLAD, Tokyo, and American Consulate General, Hong Kong.

Robert W. Rinden
Robert W. Rinden
Second Secretary of Embassy

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Action Taken

Date of Action

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Director, etc.

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Mr. YANG Chao-chia: () Commissioner of Civil Affairs, whose office is charged with carrying out the present island-wide elections.

Mr. Jenkins.

Date: February 27, 1951.

Mr. Yang began by apologizing for not having called on Mr. Rankin and others at the Embassy since Mr. Rankin's arrival. He said that being a Formosan he had to be very careful not to give the impression that he was "reporting to the Americans."

Mr. Yang expressed appreciation for American economic aid to Formosa. He said that it meant a great deal to the Formosan people and that they would never forget it.

My chief purpose in calling on Mr. Yang was to hear his version of several incidents in connection with the island-wide elections, in preparation for Embassy despatch 128 of March 5, 1951, "Popular Elections in Free China." Mr. Yang said that he had assumed the post of Commissioner of Civil Affairs somewhat reluctantly because he was afraid that he would find himself in too many compromising situations. Governor WU is the one who did more than anyone else to convince Mr. Yang that the Chinese Government was sincere in its attempts to institute democratic local government. Mr. Yang believes that K. C. Wu is almost solely responsible for having sold this idea to the Nationalist Government last year. He said that it is true that Governor Wu has had to "wink" at many things in order to hold his position, but that at heart he wants genuine democracy and has with great energy accomplished a very appreciable amount in that direction.

Mr. Yang believes that Governor Wu was able to "talk the Government into carrying out the elections" last year because of the great instability of the general situation at that time. The Nationalist Government was far less confident than it is today; among other things it greatly feared dissatisfaction among the Formosan people. As a result, the first few months of the elections went quite well, there being virtually no interference of any sort from the Government. There were a few questionable incidents in isolated areas brought on for the most part by over-zealous local KMT people, but the Government actually kept its hands clean.

Mr. Yang said that previous to the earlier elections he had gone about the Island "joyfully and with far more energy than I realized I had in exhorting the people to come out and vote because

their vote

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their vote would be free." He said, however, that since the latter part of last year things had rapidly gotten worse, that the KMT had begun to announce its support of certain candidates, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He wants to finish the job of the elections before resigning, but he fully expects to leave Government service just as soon as the elections are over in the middle of 1951.

Mr. Yang is a highly respected Formosan and is generally regarded as speaking for politically articulate Formosans perhaps more accurately than any other person on the island.

He does not speak English, but speaks Japanese, Taiwanese and acceptable Mandarin.

Mr. Yang believes that the loss of the mainland gave Generalissimo Chiang a very helpful job. He said that careful observation of President Chiang's words and actions during the past year had led him to believe that Chiang has "awakened ([REDACTED])" considerably. [REDACTED]

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